

Of pain

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Summary: She had been ripped at every edge and still, he wanted her; and she had cried to deaf ears, but he heard, he heard her cry and she didn't even make a sound. / SasuSaku AU on depression, two-shot.

Of pain

****Mithridate****

a medicine believed to be a universal antidote to or preservative against poison and disease._

* * *

><p>He'd seen it all before, he'd heard the unintelligible noises, pattern-less, echoing from the emergency room; all sorts of traumas were known to bust down the door that led them into the hospital, almost never one at a time. Thus, this was no exception â€" from the barely decipherable in that fiasco voice of Uzumaki Naruto, he assumed some sort of accident had occurred somewhere, some misfortune that concluded in possibly dozens of victims, each of them more or less wounded, and the recurrent noise of the siren could only imply ambulance after ambulance crowding the parking lot.<p>

He'd seen it all before, without a doubt, but it didn't mean he liked it, or that he thought anything along the lines of 'At least we're getting some fun once in a while', he wasn't heartless â€" do not take his best friend's word for granted, he actually had, even if deep in slumber, a heart of his own â€" and thus his chest felt as though it had been stung; so, he stood himself up, grabbed his pager, and rapidly slalomed through the people temporarily spending their lives in the emergency area, some superficially wounded, easy-to-fix as they'd call them, concerned for the much worse off, the not-so-probable-to-wake-up-again.

So, having reached the epicentre of the said room, his torso made a 40o turn, and then one more to the other side, merely to get a better picture of what was happening, of needed him the most right at that moment; moments later, his feet led him to bed no.12 where some man, having suffered some form of trauma to his shoulder " and he suspected it was a dislocation, nothing more but it was always better to check before you allow your residents to handle it; better safe than sorry with those useless bastards, he'd say. It only took the doctor 2 minutes at most to settle on a course for the treatment when, all of a sudden, his ears were met with the high-pitched sound of a girl's " improperly said a girl's, as it sounded nearly mature, just not quite there - constant cries, as well as the sound of the wheels of a stretcher rolling rapidly, urgently across the room and he knew. Thus, dr. Uchiha Sasuke shouted to the nearest resident to take over the man he was nursing before so that he could focus himself where the real problem was.

Since his body was fairly muscular, fairly taken care of, it wasn't all that hard to catch up with the stretcher and he inquired for information; however, in order to do that, he had to forcibly remove some womanly figure from the vicinity of it in order to get a better look at whoever was injured " he expected some form of protest from whoever it was he had to push away, but he got none which only led him to forget that there ever was anyone else beside the youthful figure of a most-likely-to-be a girl enrolled in whatever highschool, but compared to what he assumed she looked like less" broken, this image was gruesome. The said patient was a fairly pale, more like light complected girl, with long, shiny tresses of pastel yellow hair, a colour much like that of a species of Iris flowers, and her eyes were tightly shut " from the shock or the pain, he rationalized. The left side of her face was swollen to an extent it was in no way unnoticeable, some blood had solidified at the corner of her mouth and he could depict it had flooded out of it during whatever trauma it is she suffered; at that point, it was safe to assume her body was more or less covered in bruises, but what was the most important was that she had suffered being stabbed in the inferior side of her right hypochondrium by what it looked like a metal bar, similar to what you'd be holding onto when in a train, or when ascending/descending stairs.

"Fill me in." his words were prompt, filled with authority.

The man that had brought her from the ambulance nodded, commencing his explanation " there was a disruption to the course of a train, causing it to turn 90o, hence the numerous injured; the patient's name was Yamanaka Ino, a 17-year-old student whom had been standing in the most unfortunate of areas in that specific train and so, during the impact, she had wounded up like that. She wasn't alone, she had been accompanied by Haruno Sakura, another 17-year-old student that didn't undergo trauma of that gravity " and Sasuke was reminded that there indeed was another person with them, that girl he had pushed away and he only so much as glanced in her direction to confirm that she was physically stable. The Uchiha followed through listening to the rest of the explanation " the impact was the cause of her numerous bruises, but what was the issue at hand was to get her to an operation room so that he could safely remove the bar still stabbing her, and obviously enough, part of it had been cut off at the scene to facilitate her transportation and her ulterior rehabilitation. After that, he was only to make sure she'd be able to heal, but luckily enough "

"It doesn't look like it affected her liver too much," his concentration gauge was as thick as a bowl of water that you could truly cut through it, "Get her to whatever **OR**'s free right now, I'll be there in a minute."

"Got it." The man's response was as prompt as the command had been and he resumed his motion of dragging the stretcher forward.

Sasuke, as he had stopped in his tracks for a moment merely to collect his thoughts and briefly go through the intervention that he was to do, was taken aback by the sudden, tight, grip on his forearm. Turning his head to the owner of the hand that was holding onto him, he was finally, truly met with the sight of the girl that had come with the ambulance, the girl whose name he didn't bother to remember in that chaos. It took him little to no time to conclude that when you don't have a severely injured to pay attention to, this one girl looked rather remarkable and hard to forget; save for a few scratches and the not-too-deep narrow cut on the side of her forehead, right where the skin meets the hairline, she was actually really beautiful, with peculiar blush-coloured hair and bright, intense green eyes "even more so at that moment, when she was weeping the heck out of them out of concern.

"You're gonna save her, aren't you?..." her voice was as high-pitched as he seemed to recall from when he'd distantly heard it behind his back, and he felt his heart cringe a tiny bit, but his composure remained intact, it _had _to, "Please tell me you'll save her!" she pleaded, fresh tears flooding those big eyes of hers.

He paused, scanned her and made a small effort to free his arm, watching her eyes being covered by her hands that briefly wiped away the excess water. He followed through with a couple of steps in the direction of the OR and, turning back to her nonetheless, "Get someone to look at that cut, you wouldn't want a scar out of something that minor," he said, and he could feel that she was feeble under the reign of the pain in her heart.

As he walked away however, he planted a seed of hope in that chest of hers, "I'm pretty damn good at my job."

* * *

><p>"Dammit," Sasuke's body was sprawled over one of the beds in their on-call room, forearm covering his eyes as though to protect them from the destructive light, and he wanted some peace, but that was an ideal when you had Uzumaki Naruto at your side, unable to sit himself them down due to the frustration that weighed over him. "Dammit!"<p>

"What happened, dobe?" the Uchiha inquired tiredly.

The blond threw his bottom on the nearest chair and ruffled his hair, his way of coping with hard situations and his comrade guessed it "he lost a patient. He felt for the poor idiot his best friend was, knowing the feeling all too well; it wasn't like failing a test in college "which the former did plenty "where you didn't really feel like a failure because it was a test out of many more, but when a human being died at your hands you'd be rendered incompetent, as though an _imbecile_ had been sent in there.

"Last night was the worst we've had in a while." Sasuke let out, he tried to make it better, or, at the very least less awful for the other.

"I could've saved 'im, teme! I told 'em he was gonna be fine, no complications or whatever and I didn't even think he could have internal bleeding 'cause he was looking fine!"

The Uchiha ran a hand through his dark, charcoal spikes of hair and clicked his tongue, "I didn't even get to help as many of them as any of you did. I was stuck in the OR with a girl,"

"Yeah, I saw. I hate to say it but you pulled that off," the Uzumaki let out a sigh, of both turmoil and slight annoyance; it had always been a competition between the two, and it would stay that way for a long time, "How's she anyway? Checked up on her yet?"

"I was gonna go there, but you came here all depressed and ruined my mood too."

"Tch, shut up," the blond laid back into his chair, allowed his head to bent backwards for a short while as he crossed his arms on his chest, "Y'know, you should go there. That other girl, the pinky, I took care of that cut on her forehead, but she didn't wanna leave the room."

The image of the girl begging for his best efforts to preserve the life of her friend repainted itself in his mind and he asked, "What was her name anyway?"

"Beats me, tho' I thought it sounded funny when she told me, like a riddle or something."

The man stood himself up, and every muscle in his body stung his nerves as though they were begging him to lie down just a little bit more, and it wasn't the fact that that was his job to do per se as much as he, in that moment of exhaustion darkened by the death of Naruto's anonymous patient, needed to be retrieved to the we-save-people rather than the we-can't-do-anything-for-them, and he knew she'd at least be grateful to him, and maybe he'd find out her name as well since it was quite rude even for him to not know even that.

* * *

><p>As his comrade had predicted, the pinkette was sitting on a chair beside the bed of the still asleep patient, but it was improper to say that she was sitting there, as the girl was more like plastered onto the wooden surface, gravity constantly causing her head to drop few centimetres and the soreness that she must've been feeling in her neck was, so to say, tangible. Her hair was shorter than he remembered, or was it simply an illusion brought about by the overly messy, truly effortless ponytail she'd pulled it into? Whatever the case, through the glass of the door he noted that it had to be a much lighter, likeable shade of pink had there been different circumstances as it was filled with dust and dirt, not to mention some solidified balls of blood here and there, that she must've acquired from her hands, on during the impact, etc.; her eyes were as lively as he remembered them to be and from that distance he could

barely distinguish the true green they wielded, but what was noticeable was how swollen they were from either crying herself out or overexerting her strength to stay awake or both.<p>

With a sigh, he slowly opened the door and allowed himself in and Sasuke found it quite peculiar that she jumped at the sound of him, visibly startled. The girl regained her composure in a matter of seconds and with what seemed to be the last bits of strength she had she pushed herself up and from the looks of it, tears threatened to escape her eyes once more. Troubled, the doctor tilted his head.

"I've been waiting to see you again," she began, half shyly and half wishful, "And I meant to be there the moment you finished the intervention, but " " and she paused and raised her trembling fingers to the bandage on her forehead.

"Dr. Uzumaki was taking care of that, I presume?" he continued for her.

For a split of a second, he could've sworn he saw some sort of terrified look in her eyes, but he couldn't have, could he?

"How did you know it was Dr. Uzumaki?" her expression softened to that of a polite smile.

"We're on call together, and I've known him for years, unfortunately."

His remark only led to her breathing out and she followed through with a chuckle, colour slowly being painted on her face and she looked twice more natural, more genuine than she had been; "Dr. Uzumaki told me that you were the best, even though you were a jerk?" she smiled, somewhat troubled that she might've been rude.

Sasuke walked closer and his eyes darted to the sleeping girl, briefly scanning what vitals he could pick up without the soon-to-come test results, and he chuckled shortly as well, in a rather arrogant way, "Don't trust what he says, I still wonder how he got his license."

She more like laughed this time, and he felt as though he'd offered her a glass of water after she'd been deprived of it for days; her features softened and he took note of the catchy mixture of spring green and jade that shone in those irises of hers and he recalled to have thought of her as pretty, and he wasn't wrong " she was young, filled with life. A few moments of pleasant silence followed before she bent her back, bowing her head before him and it made Sasuke slightly uncomfortable; the girl's fingers were gripping the textile of her shirt and she bit her lip as a teardrop gracefully slid down her cheek.

"Dr. Uchiha, thank you for saving my friend," right at the end of her sentence her voice broke slightly and you could hear the sound of her runny nose, "I could never repay you for that, but still, thank you so much!" the amount emotion that girl poured into her words caught him off guard.

Uchiha Sasuke had expected her to be grateful, but never to that extent, never to the extent that it'd make him feel like he was a

true, devoid of filth saviour. In his embarrassment that she could not pick on seeing her head was still lowered, he thought "do girls still do this nowadays?" For whatever reason, he felt as though it was a scene out of a less recent novel, and his hands balled into fist inside the pockets of his coat.

"You don't need to do that," he trailed off and, troubled, she raised her head as though saying "I apologize for being a nuisance".

"I'm sorry if that made you uncomfortable, I just..." her gaze fell upon her friend and she breathed in, "Ino is really important to me, she's also been my friend, my sister for a really long time,"

Sasuke contemplated on how that girl carried herself, on what a strange sight she was to his eyes, both physically and personality wise, how pretty she actually looked and how much insecurity she had to bear and he wondered "why do teenagers get insecure about in the first place? She was interesting to watch and try to decrypt, a breath of fresh air after all of the patients that did nothing but blame him for failing to do his job. And then he was reminded "

"What's your name?" he watched as her mouth shifted and she smiled patiently, a gesture that did not arouse any suspicion at first.

"Haruno Sakura."

Ah, that was it, that was the riddle Naruto had been talking about "Haruno Sakura, **Haru no Sakura**". As he picked on it, the feeling he got was as though he'd just been told about something that had been in the open for him to see, something obvious to any eye that actually looked at things; the colour of her hair indeed resembled that of the cherry blossoms in bloom, and her eyes that reflected 50 shades of green at once reinforced that.

Sakura sat herself back on the chair seemingly after having exhausted what little strength there was in her and her hand found her way to her friend's, holding tightly on the latter. Her gaze was soft and more caring than Sasuke could've ever expected an adult's to be, let alone a highschooler's. The corner of her pouty, reddened as she'd been crying, lips ascended and she embodied the word gentle, and the Uchiha did not want to disturb that state of hers, so he proceeded to check the state his patient was in. Fortunately, Yamanaka Ino was going to be alright, even if it'd take some time for her to be fully restored.

* * *

><p>Uchiha Sasuke pulled the shirt he'd been wearing up, revealing the sight of his toned core, covered in alabaster skin, to the other people that happened to be changing at that time as well. Tiredly, he threw on a dark, navy coloured T-shirt and ruffled his hair a little bit; to his right, pulling her hair into two buns, wearing the same worn out expression as the former, was Ten Ten, an orthopaedic. She sighed and as her arms were stretched above her head, her back bent with a popping sound.<p>

"So you ended up working overtime as well, huh?" the woman grabbed

hold of her bag and with a friendly wave to him, left the changing room, only to make room for an energetic, casually dressed Uzumaki Naruto to force his way in.

"What are you so hyped up for?" Sasuke sneered, rubbed his eyes before putting on his coat.

The blond nearly ignored his remark and with a fast, theatrical motion he removed his blouse, caused it to land on the floor and he stretched himself, "It's a beautiful day to save lives!" he shouted and proceeded to change into the outfit he was required to wear.

"It's almost night time." The Uchiha's voice was, as per usual, coated with a note of sarcasm.

"Can't hear you, teme, I just feel tonight's gonna be great!"

"Whatever you say." And Sasuke made his way to the door.

"Oi, are you gonna check up on that girl or I do it?" the Uzumaki turned to face his friend before grabbing his charts.

As his hand reached for the door knob and exposed the outside of the room to the two, Uchiha Sasuke shook his head in rejection, "I'll do it before I leave." He replied.

His steps down the hall were rhythmical and his eyes were naturally shifting from whatever person whose face he wouldn't bother remembering later on to nurses chatting, to patients with more or less severe situations that were lying on their hospital beds and lastly, his eyes fell onto a nearby clock that indicated the time was 4 minutes to 9 pm, so he didn't have to concern himself with visitors â€" since the Yamanaka did get quite a lot of friends to visit her, probably because of her pushy, easy-to-get-caught-up-in personality that he had found about as soon as she had opened her eyes the day before, with her best friend at her side â€" except that ... there _was_ a visitor.

The familiar figure of a rose-haired girl excitedly chatting with the afore mentioned was what his eyes were met with through the glass and from what he could pick up from that normally heart-warming scene was the _bratty_ auras they both were coated in, and it was quite surprising for him to witness as he'd watched her, he'd watched her just as he'd watched every other person he'd actively interacted with and Haruno Sakura was calm, and seemingly loving, someone dependable, trustworthy, and as his eyes laid on her hand holding a magazine and pointing towards some _'cool-looking'_ guy, he was reminded â€" _she's just a kid_, but for whatever reason he could not pinpoint, it drove him to chuckle in a light-hearted way, and unfortunately, he was noticed by the blond, whose arm was rapidly lifted and she began frantically waving for him to come in, which he did.

"Ah, Sasuke! Finally, I was getting tired of heeeeer!" Ino whined, obviously still amused by whatever it was that the two had been talking about; who would've believed that the post-surgery, deep in slumber, Yamanaka Ino would irradiate with so much energy about 30 hours later?

"Good evening, dr. Uchiha," Sakura smiled politely before turning to her friend slightly troubled, "Ino, you should be more polite! You owe your life to this person,"

Her speech pattern and sudden change in attitude intrigued him, is she holding herself back?_, he thought. But it was none of his business, what that girl did was none of his business. He proceeded to check his patient's stats and annoyance was painted on his features, in a quite obvious manner when he felt his arm being pinched. The culprit was more than easy to find, as a craving-for-attention Ino was pouting.

"Geez! Sakura said you were amazing, but you're always so grumpy! Such a shame you'll get wrinkles, you're pretty cute."

"Ino!" flustered, the pinkette motioned for her friend to stop; having known her for more than a decade, the Haruno didn't thought of it as surprising that frivolous-and-on-the-hunt-for-cute-guys Yamanaka Ino would talk as seen, but it didn't mean she should do it freely.

"But, seriously now â€" ever since I woke up in this stinking pit of hell, you're the only nice I've seen for hell's sake! What good is a genius and cute doctor if he doesn't even interact with you?"

Sasuke smirked, in a rather arrogant way as he eyed his wristwatch; for the first time in most likely forever, Sakura had to admit â€" Uchiha Sasuke was the 3 s's, smart, sexy and strong; what more, he even seemed like a decent person despite the lack of overly noticeable expressions or despite the fact that he did not seem all that interested in social interaction. However, she had no hopes for falling in love, not with him, and not with anyone anytime soon.

Having finished checking the state his patient was in, the Uchiha sighed, "By the way, didn't visit hours end about an hour ago?" he was unintentionally hard with his remark, harshness that fuelled the turmoil in the roseate's heart and she bowed her head apologetically.

"I apologize, I just ... wanted to spend more time with Ino," her voice made it sound as though there was more for her to say, but that was not the case.

What did intrigue the man further though, were her gestures, her spineless, submissive tendencies and it felt somewhat out of place, specifically because the girl did not give off the feeling of a weak, easy-to-break person â€" she'd stayed awake the whole night hoping her friend would be alright, she'd cried the almost entire time but her lucidity was intact, and from what he'd heard from Naruto, she didn't even cringe once when he'd stitched her cut. But then she'd given up any sort of resistance when he simply reminded her of the curfew as he did not want neither her or himself to get into trouble. And be that as it may, why did he even bother analyzing her that much?

"Hey, it's not that big of a deal, but I think you should leave in case the nurses find you here," and he tried an understanding smile, "They make a fuss out of anything."

Sakura nodded and smiled apologetically once more, before leaning in and giving Yamanaka Ino a hug as tight as her injuries allowed, following by the former to stand up and strengthen her skirt; _oh_, Sasuke just then noticed, _she's wearing her school uniform_. For a split of a second he reminisced of the times he'd worn one too, but it did not mean _that_ much to him. However, the seed of intrigue only grew further, implementing itself deeper and deeper by the second; _why's she still wearing the uniform now? Has she been here all day, she's never gone home?_

"Since I'm leaving anyway," he started, "I'll walk you out."

With a nod and a smile, she followed the man, waving at her friend that she wasn't very happy to leave. With slow steps, the two of them strolled down the hall, passing by what seemed to be employees that lacked urgency which could lead to a single conclusion "it was going to be a quiet night in there. As they boarded the elevator, Sasuke couldn't help but observe her usual stance " she had good posture, a rather healthy looking body but her head was lowered the entire time and it was as though she had been avoiding to make contact to anybody the entire time.

"How long have you been here today?" he inquired, fuelled by his itching to confirm his theory.

"Ah," she raised her head to gaze at him, and she thought before she answered, "I think I came somewhere around 7.30 pm?"

Her answer was spotless and any person in his right mind wouldn't have suspected a lie, but in _his_ mind, it didn't quite add up; if that was so, when did she leave school, knowing she had never gone home? Still, it was none of his business so he inquired no further.

* * *

><p>Every day that he'd been on call he saw her there, time and time again, in Yamanaka Ino's room, either genuinely laughing or talking about whatever and if he ever caught sight of pink in his peripheral vision, he'd stop in his tracks and look through the glass at the two girls, enjoying themselves. He'd also noticed she could also wield the expressions of annoyance, anger, and he could depict her complaining about the things that disturbed her and if he had to describe what it felt like, to watch her, he'd reply he felt as though he was accidentally let in on a secret, that he was committing a crime by knowing that the Haruno Sakura was, so to say, classified information for Yamanaka Ino only, or rather, for her and her family probably.

She simply perked his interest and he thought it was funny that he was keeping watch on a _kid_, and whenever Naruto would jokingly comment that he was '_visiting his precious patient pretty often_', he'd feel annoyed because Yamanaka Ino wasn't _that_ interesting, she was painted in the beautiful colour of youth, but that was pretty much it. On the other hand, her companion was all the more intriguing and captivating to watch, even if for nothing but mere seconds between either his rounds or surgeries. However, he'd never admit any of that, I mean, him, a renowned attendant at that hospital, also known as the _Big Grump_ by his colleagues, would be interested in a

17-year-old that he knew nothing of? Forget it.

Still, one day, about a week after he'd first seen her visit the said person, while doing a check-up on her, he'd noticed his patient had had someone get on her nerves and judging by the lack of human beings in that room, he could only assume it had been her friend that annoyed the blond even more than usual. So, he asked about it, out of concern for his patient, of course.

"This girl," and she pointed at Sakura, whose eyebrows furrowed, "Hasn't eaten a thing today 'cause she was busy. If you're that concerned about me, Sasuke, get her something to eat!"

And despite the fact he wanted to give that person that would constantly piss him off more than the Big Grump needed a mouthful that he was in no way her chalet man, he took the opportunity.

"What are you talking about Ino?! You can't just go ordering Uchiha-san around and cause him so much trouble!" the Haruno protested, cheeks flushed and he'd seen her pout for the first time, live, literally in front of him.

However, in spite of her rejection, he tilted his head to the door, eyes expectant, "The cafeteria is close and I can get you in there,"

"I've passed by it every day when coming here and so I saw that it closes by 7 pm, and it's past that... I don't want you to go out or your way like that for me, dr. Uchiha." She meekly replied.

Seeing that course of action and knowing it was more than predictable, Ino clicked her tongue, "Y'know, forehead, you should really consider taking up people's offers sometimes. It's rude to cause trouble, yeah, but it's ruder to refuse their kindness."

With a sigh of submission, Sakura stood herself up, "Alright then. Thank you," she smiled to her benefactor and followed him out of the room her comrade was in.

When they reached the cafeteria, the first thing that the pinkette noticed was that the lights were out and the sign obviously said 'closed'. Thus, she felt some sort of regret for having accepted the offer as it was indeed a bit of a hassle, but when the man opened the door before her and gestured that she went inside, the sound of loud snoring reached her ears. Sprawled on a bench was Uzumaki Naruto, fast asleep, drool slipping out of his mouth.

"The cafeteria does close at 7 for outsiders and maybe even interns, but us attendants have some benefits. Like that idiot there that takes a nap here whenever the call room is ... occupied." Sasuke explained, as he chuckled at his helpless friend.

"Now," he whispered closer to her, "Watch."

The Uchiha took feline-like steps towards the sleeping beauty, and as he bent downwards, he cupped his mouth as though to amplify the sound and let out in the most high-pitched of voices, "Narutoooo! Get up or you'll be late for school-ttebane!"

In that moment, completely out of it, the blond sprung upwards, stood himself up and nearly tripped into place in his attempt to '_get ready for school_'. When realisation hit him, realisation catalysed by the genuine, loud laughter of Haruno Sakura, his face turned so red that his anger was tangible, that steam burst out from his ears and he threw himself on his friend and they '_battled_' for a couple of seconds while standing before both burst into laughter as well.

"Y'know, you should consider showing your _cool_ side, not your _douchy_ side when you bring a woman here!" the dim light of the cafeteria caused the Uzumaki, whose vision was still a tiny bit blurry, to not ever so slightly recognize Sasuke's companion.

"I didn't bring a woman, dobe," and his hands pointed to the amused girl.

Naruto crouched forward, and scanned her, pushing himself to remember who she was. After a few scratched on his head and a few thoughts along the lines of '_who the fuck is she_', '_will I get in trouble cause I didn't recognize her?!_', '_I can't even see shit in here-ttebayo!_', he still couldn't tell a single thing; however, when his eyes fell upon his _masterpiece_ on her forehead that was almost healed anyway, he seemed to recall something.

"Ah! You're, yeah, from that night!" and he pointed towards the mark on the side of her forehead.

Even in that dim light, it was still visible enough for Sasuke to notice that the fact that " _after so much fucking time and staring_ " he recognized her caused the Haruno to rejoice, and she smiled brightly, nodding her head; she even thanked him afterwards for taking care of her, as though he was some sort of do-it-all Greek god. If it were _him_, _he_ would've recognized her straight away, and he would've been cooler about it.

"...What was your name again?" Naruto scratched his head.

That idiot.

She chuckled somewhat dryly, as though she felt a bit troubled, "Haruno Sakura."

And just then, he burst as well, "Ah, yeah! That was it, Haruno Sakura!"

"Does my name sound strange or something?" she was expectant, and genuinely curious at his reaction.

"No, no! It just sounded cool is all, like, you know, _Haru no Sakura_!"

Sasuke, however, was through with his idiotic behaviour and thus he pushed his friend in the shoulder, as though asking him to cease acting stupid. Afterwards, he led the pinkette to the counter and told her to wait as he walked a couple metres to the left and knocked on a door, apparently a door reserved for the staff of the cafeteria to pass through. Couple minutes later, lights were turned on by the counter and a tired-looking old lady exposed herself before

them.

"What do you want to eat?" the Uchiha inquired.

Taking a few seconds to think, "I'd like some myso soup if it's not too much trouble,"

The woman only nodded and left, for the kitchen, Sakura assumed. Pointing towards a table, Sasuke walked her to it and sat on the opposite end of it, facing the roseate. Naruto, however, sat himself beside her, eyes focused on her. Even though he knew beyond a doubt that his idiotic friend meant no harm whatsoever, it still itched him to ask the blond to '_move his ass elsewhere_' or just to '_keep the appropriate distance_'. The Uzumaki, however, not having listened to the other's thoughts, began making small talk with the girl.

"So, what school do you go to, _Sakura-chan_?" it wasn't as though his tone changed when he called her name, but the closeness that it implied succeeded to further piss Sasuke off.

"Ah, I go to North High. I'm almost through with being a sophomore." She smiled politely, the only good thing in that whole opportunity-to-study-her-turned-against-Sasuke situation being that she wasn't showing _him_ expressions he'd never seen before.

"Must be cool to be young..." Naruto pouted, sprawling himself on the table, "Tho' I guess it's cool for you since you're a pretty girl," and that was when Uchiha Sasuke decided on death sentence to be the penalty Uzumaki Naruto would have to suffer after all of that was over.

_Did he just fucking call her _pretty_? This idiot has no common sense_, he thought, completely enraged.

"_Naruto_," he pressed, attempting to make him understand with a simple call of his name, but, of course, it wasn't that simple with him. So, charcoal irises stared, completely pissed off, "You're creeping her out."

At his remark, the said idiot only stared in pure confusion, shifting between the two, "Eh? How am I creepy, teme? Ne, ne, Sakura-chan! Approximately, how many guys confessed to you?" even though it was still decent and in no way disturbing, the man brought himself a bit closer to her, without any malice in his intentions.

However, Sakura was obviously troubled and she didn't quite know how to respond, which triggered the need to know the answer to that stupid question in Sasuke as well, and he felt he'd hate whatever her response would be. Still, she shook her head, and tuck a few strands of her ever so soft looking hair behind her ear. What the Uchiha noted was that that girl was definitely born to be lady-like, or at least, to have precision in her movements, and to carry herself steadily, hence the composure he'd witnessed on the night of the accident, because although she was crying and her heart had been trampled by destiny, she did not faint, did not break down.

"Actually, people don't really notice me, so I don't think anyone would go out with me..." she trailed off.

"Eeeeh? How come?! You're prettier than the girls _we_ went to school with-ttebayo!"

She just smiled and raised her shoulders unknowingly, but _he_ knew what to look at, and _he_ saw the muscles on her arms tense as though she was gripping tighter and tighter so he kicked his friend's foot underneath the table so that he would cease for good, and for once in his time, he got the message and tried being more reserved and not so intrusive, as she was obviously not enjoying herself. Soon enough, she was brought the soup she'd asked for and as she ate in silence, the Uzumaki gave up and laid himself back to sleep on a bench, few metres away from the two of them. As the girl charged herself, _his_ eyes were focused on her and many things ran a marathon around his mind, and he felt as though he wanted to ask a thousand of questions, but when he actually got to it, there was none he should've asked.

Once she was done with her food, she returned the bowl to the counter and bowed her head respectfully when the woman showed herself once more to take it. Sakura strengthened her uniform on her, made sure she looked presentable and thanked the both of them for their kindness; she also mentioned that it was getting quite late, thus she was to leave. When she left, Sasuke mimicked Naruto's actions and positioned himself on the bench he'd been sitting. A few minutes later, thinking that his friend had eventually fallen asleep, the Uzumaki whispered:

"If Sakura-chan wasn't a kid, she'd be a catch," he didn't expect the Uchiha to either hear or respond, and his expectations were met.

However, that isn't to say that Sasuke wasn't awake or fully lucid.

* * *

><p>When she stepped into the entrance hall of her house, the only stimulus that she could sense was the old, wooden floor that creaked under her feet, and it was pitch dark. However, Haruno Sakura hoped with what little strength she had left that that would continue being the case with every step that she took. Unfortunately, her prayers weren't answered that evening either.<p>

"Is that you, Sakura?" cutting through the reassuring silence, the voice of a man floated in the air, tingling her ears, almost driving her to gasp in despair.

"Yes, I'm sorry I'm late." She responded after a few seconds.

"You've been coming home late lately." The words were coated in what felt like a promised punishment, and she breathed in, maintaining her composure.

"I told you, Ino suffered severe injuries in the accident and I've been going to visit her because she's alone,"

Some sort of begging could be noted in her tone, if only you had the mercy to feel for her. The girl had long since dropped downwards, hugging her knees as she curled into herself. In that moment,

footsteps could be heard from the room the voice had originated in, and, slowly, she lifted herself back up and once more did she breathe in. As the presence of the man drew nearer and nearer Sakura regretted having left the hospital as soon as she had been done eating, perhaps she should've kept Uchiha Sasuke company for just a bit longer; no, she pushed the thought away, who'd want a nuisance like me around, anyway? Thus, her heart sank and she no longer felt afraid that he could then see her, even though he couldn't quite distinguish her.

"Are you sure you're not hiding anything from me?" he further inquired, but she was senseless, apart from the cold tear that had dripped down her even paler than normal face. She didn't care anymore, and she was sure that she wouldn't even feel the pain that was soon to come, she deserved it, anyway.

"Of course, I don't have any reason to hide anything from you, dad."

* * *

><p>"Y'know, Sasuke said I'll be discharged in a couple of days, said I've had a miraculous rehabilitation!" Ino bragged, having stood herself up to look at her 'battle scar' as she'd call the mark the surgical intervention had left on her body.

Sakura, on the other hand, simply sighed, "When are you gonna shut up about your greatness, pig?" a giggle.

"Hey!" the blond countered in a jokingly aggressive manner, "Just because I'm butchered doesn't mean you can call me a pig!"

Both of the girls burst into laughter, right when Uchiha Sasuke entered the room, hands thrown in his pockets. He had eavesdropped on the last part of their conversation, and the sight of a bratty, mean Haruno Sakura was impregnated in his retinas, as well as the sound of her voice when she acted that way was memorised much like how computers record audios and thus they're embedded there.

"You two are really lively today," his voice was kind of blank, distracted, hint that he had his hands full with other patients, in grimmer states.

"Ne, ne, Sasuke! You don't visit me that often anymore, so I'm feeling neglected here," the Yamanaka began, teasingly.

The Uchiha proceeded to briefly check her, but as far as his knowledge went â€ and, as he had stated before, he was pretty damn good at his job â€ there wasn't really any malfunction that could appear in her body, at least not any related to the wounds she had suffered in the accident. When he said that her healing process was miraculous, he was in no way kidding. It took her a couple of weeks at most to regain strength, but it didn't she'd be entirely free, she'd have to occasionally come in for check-ups, but other than that, her condition was brilliant. Now, as for him, deep within his consciousness he knew he wouldn't be seeing the pinkette anymore either, and he wasn't particularly fond of that consequence, but time passes, and all things come to an end, not that he was interested in her or anything.

"Oh, Sakura?" Ino let out in surprise, and as soon as Sasuke picked up on the concern in her voice, his eyes were planted on the Haruno. "Where'd you get that bruise?"

Apparently, while being consumed by the routine that the Yamanaka's check-ups were and diffuse, mixed thoughts of the other, the Uchiha failed to notice that Sakura had stood herself up, searched through her bag for some wipes as she was to head for the toilet. However, in doing so, her skirt raised a slight bit in while she turned, revealing a plum, if not a darker, sickeningly purple, bruise on the back of her thigh. The roseate giggled clumsily in response, and the way she waved her hand dismissingly appeared natural to... Ino.

"I got it in ****PE**** today, when we were playing volleyball." She explained.

"Geez, how'd that happen?" Yamanaka Ino pushed for more details, but, much to Sasuke's dismay, she seemed convinced, as though it was no surprise.

"I was in Temari's team today, and we both lunged for the ball at the same time, so we kinda crashed into each other," she laughed, apparently amused, "People said it was a sight to see, as if we were playing Twister or something," he trailed on, taking a couple of steps away.

"You're hopeless without me," Ino sighed, "You're the ultimate klutz, Sakura."

Sakura? A klutz?, the Uchiha wondered; how could that girl that had surgeon-class precision in her movements, that when she ate her soup never once did she spill a drop it or make any sort of mess, the girl he'd never seen trip be a klutz? It wasn't like he knew everything about her, but if you are tagged as such, wouldn't you be generally clumsy? Other than emotional when the worst happened, Haruno Sakura's nerves were of steel; thus, the question was begged "how'd she get that bruise? Maybe it was really nothing, maybe that was what had actually gone down, but he had a hard time believing it. What he could believe, though, was a much grimmer explanation to the origin of the wound; answer that, however, fit into every hole that was the image of her he'd built in his brain.

What if she was hit by someone?, interpretation that would naturally bring about the question, then why did she have to lie?. Furthermore, if that were the case, she'd still mention it to her best friend with the argument that 'it was an accident' or at least she'd have that sort of shocked aura around her, since it would have been the first and only time she'd be mistreated like that. But, maybe, and Sasuke's blood pressure dropped a slightly bit, she's being abused? That theory did not sit well with him, and so he cast it away; after all, she wouldn't endure something that awful, would she?

"Then, I'm going to the bathroom. Be right back," she casually said, exiting the room.

A couple of minutes later, seeing that he was finished, the man blankly waved at his patient as he left the room as well, leaving Yamanaka Ino alone and angry for being left alone. His steps

unconsciously traced towards the nearest toilet, and waited by the women's door. He could quite rationalize whatever the heck he was doing, but he'd already gone through with it, he'd already embarrassed himself to the point where he appeared as a rather stoic man with porcelain skin heavily tinted in a mixture of rosy shades that leaned against the wall, _casually_ waiting. Even the most inexpressive of his colleagues, Sai, fought to hide his chuckle when he passed by the Big Grump that looked as though he was waiting for his nauseous girlfriend whose vomit motion could easily be heard to come out. When she did come out, Sakura was fairly surprised and he could tell, he could tell she suspected some sort of malicious intent from him?

Why're you so afraid, he pondered as he motioned for her to dismiss any negative assumptions, _why does every single action of yours reinforce _that _theory?_ He explained that he was simply waiting for Naruto to come out and that he actually remembered he had something to ask her. Now, when dealing with someone you consider is being abused, it is very important how you handle the situation, how you go about it " therefore, you must be very subtle, and slowly bring into question that possibility so as not to scare that person, because if they feel cornered by someone other than their aggressor, they won't open up to your efforts.

"I," and he felt his sudden boldness vanish as though it was never there, "thought that you might be involved in some sort of abusive relationship."

I said _subtle_, Sasuke, mind my words. As a result, Sakura's face looked as if every ounce of blood had been sucked out of it, and her eyes were as wide opened as it was physically possible; she watched him, no, it _seemed _like she did as she was nothing more than ghost in that moment. Her lips trembled in either despair or fear and she definitely scared. The girl took a step back and she _did_ think her actions through, she knew she couldn't let herself be figured out, but how? How'd he figure it out, when they'd never so much as shared anything? For he was silent, for he was an adult that gave life back to those who misfortunately were on the brink of losing it, for he embodied the things she enjoyed " he never openly judged, nor did he look as though he'd done it even in his mind, he never inquired, and he, despite his lone aura, offered her kindness at times she was nothing more than a nuisance; so, how did he figure her out?

"What are you talking about?" she tried to questioningly smile at him, apparently confused at his sudden, peculiar words.

Sasuke, on the other hand, forgot how to function; it was not accomplishment he'd made, and her reaction, that moment in which she also malfunctioned, spoke wonders to him, allowed him to gaze at a new " or, rather, the true Haruno Sakura, not the polite, submissive girl he'd been seeing every single day as she visited her friend and he finally understood. He understood while she took every chance she could to break the rules, to stay past the curfew, until he'd find her and remind her that she had to return home. She had given out that she hadn't been dating anyone all thanks to Naruto's nosy ass, hence he guessed it had to have been someone at home, someone from the restricted group of human beings that she called '_family_'. He was a doctor, surgeon even. He was one to heal people and as we've already mentioned, he wasn't heartless, so he felt for her, he felt a sense of injustice in that whole situation because had

she been as wicked as a serial killer he would've understood, but she appeared as a girl that cared for people, that would put others first, a task he, as a person, had always had a penchant for failing. He wasn't even a psychiatrist or someone that could bring about justice, or at least someone close to her, so why did it matter so much whether or not he could help her?

"Why do you think that's the case, Uchiha-san?" she asked once more, but it was futile; the droplet of sweat on her forehead, the tension in her legs, the way the left corner of her mouth had dropped, "What you're implying is unthinkable," she let out desperately.

"I mean, who in their right mind would even endure something like that?" and her composure was reconstructed, pieced together from its shreds and she pressed forward, fists clenched as she walked away from him.

He didn't know either, and he had yet to judge with a clear conscience later what he was about to do.

"Someone that has no other place to return to," he thought, and she ceased in her tracks. "Someone that, even she'd be missed by some idiotic person, wouldn't disrupt the way the world functions if she disappeared,"

Her shoulders began trembling, "Someone that considers herself a disgrace."

And he was going to say more if not for his pager going off, informing him that an emergency had taken place, that right at that time someone's life was at stake and thus he couldn't press further. His feet began tapping the floor in slow footsteps before transitioning into a real sprint; when he passed by her, he had no time to await for her response. Uchiha Sasuke had a duty, and that was to save that one person's life. Even so, for a mere second he glanced back in her direction, and told her not to leave. Having been left there, in the surprisingly empty hallway, Haruno Sakura's world and resolve began to crumble under that man's words, that man that she didn't even know all that much. Up until then, no one had been clever enough, or had paid enough attention to figure out what had been happening in her life; and he, whom she always felt was staring at her because she was a nuisance, always, always there at the hospital. But this doctor, Uchiha Sasuke, that had answered to her prayers and saved the life of the most important person to her, crawled under skin and, somehow, deciphered every detail and she couldn't comprehend what it was that she felt "sorrow or joy?

* * *

><p>Two hours had passed and she didn't know what to do, what road to go, what lie to bake and feed down Ino's throat next; she hadn't returned to grab her bag and the blond must've worried herself to death. She was idly sitting in the dark, empty cafeteria and she thanked God no one had business there. When he told her not to leave, she so badly wanted to, maybe just to spite him because he was mocking the last bit of humanity she had left in herself, but it was as though the nerves spread throughout her body refused to inform her muscles, her numb muscles of that command. It was as though she begged herself to remain there, to at least hear him out. What Sakura believed, she didn't even know herself. In what felt like a gesture

of fear, the girl buried her head in her knees, and she hugged herself tightly, it had become a lullaby.<p>

He used to hold her all of the time, and _he_ said he was '_gluing her pieces back together_' each time he did, but _he_ was no longer there and she cried as heavily yet silently as she possibly could and it all came back to that one question again " _why am I here again? For what purpose is my existence not ceased, if this is all there is to it?_ However, as much as she needed not be interrupted in that moment, the door swung open and Uzumaki Naruto threw himself on the nearest bench. Luckily for her, she had chosen a seat on the far end of the room, deep within the darkest no one could see through, and she made of her sleeve to wipe away her tears, to wipe clean her nose and shortly after, her ears were tickled by the sound of the man's snoring, almost causing her to purely laugh at how carefree a trauma surgeon could look on the outside.

But the peace of the moment didn't last for long as the door burst open once more and exposed to her Uchiha Sasuke, still wearing the scrubs from his just finished intervention, and even from afar she could tell how rushed he was, how he frantically scanned the room. As for the previously mentioned man, he had been scared shitless, so he was now found on the floor after having let out quite a scream of shock.

"Dobe, tell me you've seen her," he wasn't shouting, he didn't have that desperation in his speech, but he clearly lacked the time to deal with his incompletely awakened friend so he, before he got any response, commenced looking around the cafeteria.

"Huh? Seen _who_?" the blond scratched his head, still seated on the ground. However, as he noticed the frantic movements of his friends, he quickly stood himself up and joined his search.

"Sakura, have you seen it?"

Oh, her heart jolted painfully. _He_ called my name, _her_ slim fingers gripped the fabric of her shirt in her attempt to calm her chest, to soothe the pain and cease the excitement. _No_ man has called my name with such since then, he silently trailed off in her mind and she in awe. She watched as he clicked his tongue as the timer someone had set on him was running low and he violently left the room, leaving behind a dumbfounded Uzumaki whose eyes were as large as a doll's. She was sure he didn't understand the littlest bit of what had just transpired, as indicated by the fact that he clumsily turned and headed for the counter.

"That freaked me out... I need ramen for this," and he knocked on the door beside the counter, "Oh, old laaaady, please get me some raaaaamen!"

Moments later, whoever was inside that staff room turned on the lights in the cafeteria, even though still quite dimly, just like they had done when she had eaten there; that, however, caused things to take a different turn that she had anticipated as she was visible enough for him to notice and to gasp at. He hurriedly made his way towards her, cobalt eyes filled with the brim with what looked like both confusion and concern. He let himself down in front of so that she would be looking at him from above, and ran a hand through his golden spikes.

"Hey, you alright, Sakura-chan? Sasuke was looking for you just a moment ago," and realisation finally hit him, "But y'were already here..."

The girl couldn't help a sniff.

"What's wrong? Why didn't ya answer him?"

As she wiped away every remnant of the tears she had shed, she whispered an '_i'm sorry_'.

"What the hell's goin' on here?!" he borderline shouted, "What's going on between the two of you?"

Sakura stood herself up and smiled troubled, and no muscle of her body was going to escape her reign anymore, "He just something really mean to while I was in my friend's room and he thought I took it seriously. Initially, I did, but it was silly of me to let it get to me," she laughed, a light-hearted, natural kind of laughter.

"Ah, so that was it..." Naruto felt a weird sensation in his chest, he wasn't sure what to believe anymore "€" on the one hand, Sasuke's behaviour was as genuine as genuine gets, but on the other hand, the girl before him was nothing more than a _patient's friend_ to the former, and she had acted completely in character.

"If you don't mind, Uzumaki-san, I'll go find him and apologize,"

Right when she walked out the door did he respond, entirely confused by the sudden turn of event, "Ah, sure..."

She took slow, citizen-like steps down the hallway back to Ino's room where she assumed she could either find him or at least explain what had happened to her; she'd say a sudden stomach ache hit her and she wanted to rest for a bit, and she had gone to the cafeteria "€" wait, the cafeteria? The fact that she had entered and hid in that room for quite the amount of time without being allowed to, without having anyone's consent to her decision, she had acted like a brat and caused trouble for everyone. Uchiha Sasuke had a patient in what could have been a near-death state that he obviously chose to take care of, since it was his duty, his noble duty, and she allowed herself to feel remorse for that? How very pitiful.

When she entered Ino's room, the blond, whose features were worn out, sprung at her and entrapped her in what felt like the tightest hug ever, and, unlike Uchiha Sasuke did when he searched for her, _she_ yelled, "Where the heck have you been?! You've been missing for two hours, and Sasuke was in surgery so I couldn't ask him about it! I've looked around for you as much as the nurse let me..."

"I'm sorry," she hugged back, genuinely resenting her choice of action, "I just broke down with a stomach ache so I asked a friend of Uchiha-san's to let me stay in the cafeteria for a bit. All I know is I feel asleep and woke up just now..."

"You're so carefree, forehead... What would I have done without you?"

_What would I have done without _you_,_ she asked herself, and she resented the Sakura that chose to hide herself, to let her most precious friend down when she had no right to. Few moments later, consumed by exhaustion, the person she'd be looking for entered the room; however, she quickly noted, he must've seen her from the outside hence the lack of visible urgency in his moves.

"Geez, you're supposed to be my doctor, but you're not there when we need you!" Ino yelled.

"Aa," the man briefly responded, "Sorry."

"What was so important that you had to deal with it when poor Sakura was tortured by a stomach ache so awful she had to hide in the cafeteria?" The Yamanaka further questioned, truly angered.

Sasuke, just as the Haruno predicted, picked up on the keyword there â€" the cafeteria â€" but simply, just then, pulled off the cap, letting his dark, pitch black hair loose, "There was an emergency I had to take care of."

But the pinkette understood, and that is why she responded to him as such, "You should be more considerate, Ino. It's not just you and me in this hospital, people are often on the brink of death, just like you were."

"You should go home, it's really late," the doctor followed, "C'mon, I'll walk you to the elevator."

Haruno Sakura nodded and obediently listened to what the man had said; the moment the two exited the room though, he grabbed her forearm and forcibly pulled her after him, leading her to the on-call room, that was, as he had previously checked, empty. Once the two of them were in, Sasuke locked the door behind them and ceased any movement, palms stuck to his hips in an expectant manner. She meekly held his gaze until she no longer found the strength in her to do, until she reached that point where the self-loathing she was feeling rose to her throat and she felt strangled; how was she even supposed to explain her selfish actions?

"I don't blame you for hiding there," he began and she once more believed he was so very hard to read, "I don't blame you for not letting me know you were there either."

"No, don't â€" " but her words were cut off by his gesture of raising his hand, he wasn't done talking.

"I pretty much cornered you there, so it wasn't surprising that you reacted that way. I'm sorry," he offered and took a step forward, breathing out so as to calm himself, because if he was calm, the chances she'd be calm as well increased, "I don't want you going home to whoever it is that hurt you."

"If I don't go home now, it's going to hurt so much more later." She replied with such timidity that he doubted she had any bones implanted in her structure, the girl was so feeble.

"I'll be taking you with me tonight."

Huh? Unconsciously, she took a step behind, and she did not quite

comprehend where the situation was going. The light in her beautiful, beautiful eyes had long since vanished, alike the blood that had been drained from that face of hers, and he observed her body, really observed her body for the first time, how her legs were really attractive as they were straight and slim, with just enough muscle built into them, and just as he noticed that, there was no way he could've missed that stance of hers, her natural stance due to being physically abused " she had developed a tendency to have one of her feet planted behind her, whilst the other was barely touching the ground; thus, she could flee at any time, just as a wounded animal would.

"Y-you don't know what you're saying... He'll hurt me and you'll get in trouble... What if he claims you abducted me?"

"It's your testimony against his, and you're the one bearing wounds."

With what energy she had left running through her veins, her hands gripped the opposite arm respectively, in an attempt to embrace herself, "I can't do this, you don't understand,"

"Of course I don't understand, I can't possibly understand," he breathed out and with few, slow steps he walked towards the couch in the room and pointed the empty seat beside him for her to let herself fall onto, "But you don't either. You don't understand that there's a way out of this."

Sakura gulped, she felt herself get dizzy by the second and she was at a loss of words, at a point where she couldn't quite tell who she was or what she wanted, her pump lips had been bitten the hell out of, her orbs were all out of tears to spill and she was the epitome of pain, of spoilt youth, the embodiment of a tree, a beautiful cherry blossom tree whose flowers had been ripped off every single year, that eventually leading to its branches being cut off, one by one. Was there hope left for such a disgrace, did that disgrace even deserve that hope?

"I don't deserve that, and even if I did... How would I know if I can trust you?"

Still, his expression didn't change in the slightest; his hand still pointed to the seat he wanted her to take, and the galloping heart in her chest pleaded with its last ounce of resistance that he gave up, that he allowed her to return to that pit of hell she belonged to.

"Why are you doing this?..." her voice broke out and she was screaming, and if she could, rivers would flow down her face.

"I don't know either," he sighed, "But you crawled under my skin."

The weakness in her knees was becoming more and more prominent with every word of his as he pushed forward, and by the time her feet brought her inches apart, standing in front of him, she had long since forgotten that the door was locked, that she had dropped her bag and books spilt out of it, that his shift wasn't over yet, but she fell into those dark, alike those of a wolf, eyes and somewhere in the depth of her mind someone prayed that what had transpired that

day was but true, and fingers unconsciously escaped the reign of her encephala. They touched the side of his handsome face and it felt like skin, like someone that wouldn't jump at her, like someone that wouldn't hurt her.

"I have to say, you're one annoying brat," his remark caused her to jump a little, and her heart jolted, "But if you come home with me, I'll tell you everything you want to know." It didn't take long for the softness of his words to sink into her brain, and as she processed the information, she stuck out her hand to him.

"Pinky promise?..."

He joined his pinky finger with hers and held onto it, "Yeah."

* * *

><p>"What?" he inquired, slightly annoyed.<p>

Her eyes decided on taking in the whole sight of his apartment and she walked back and forth, embedding everything into her memory, and he thought she was the reincarnation of a child, brought to a new, exciting place, and in spite of the sour and worn out expression her face bore, the way jade glimmered whenever he caught a glimpse of it, she really did look like a child; _well, she technically is a child,_ he thought.

"It's just, it's a nice place, but I expected..." as she peeked into his kitchen, she lost the power to concentrate on properly responding.

"Some sort of luxurious mansion, because I'm a surgeon?"

She turned to him and eagerly nodded her head, before checking out his bathroom, "Yeah, something like that."

He stepped into the kitchen and sliding open the refrigerator, his hands pulled out some juice that he poured into a glass for her. Moments later, when she joined him, she sat at his rather small dining table and eyed the glass questioningly or, rather, why it was the sole glass placed on the table.

"I don't like sweet things, not even drinks."

The explanation caused her to giggle amusedly, "Then why do you have juice?"

"That idiot just randomly leaves bottles here whenever he crashes at my place."

She took a sip of the peach flavoured juice, before it turned into a rather slurp-sounding motion and soon enough, seeing that she'd been overly dehydrated, the glass was emptied. Sakura blinked a couple of times to wash the exhaustion away and, eventually, her gaze fell onto him, onto his defined jaw line and collarbone, to his spiky bangs partially covering his eyes, to his rather rough looking lips, to the muscles that were noticeable through his discoloured T-shirt, most likely due to being worn often as well as washed often, and it felt like a new thing to see, _he_ felt like a new thing for to see and attentively look at, and somewhere deep in her mind, a siren set off

â€" she was alone in a man's apartment, with the said man. But, she took no notice of it, and he was pleased to see some colour stain her face as she blushed, and her lips were slightly parted and that was when his brain signalled a warning, because she fucking beautiful and she was defenceless, and she was the first to ever drive him to such intensity of actions.

"Ah," she remembered, "You mean Uzumaki-san?"

He answered with a nod, and for the first time ever, she watched him yawn, and it stung her that she was part of the things that had been overexerting him the past few hours. But, he was not done yet. He tilted his head towards the fridge, as though to question if she was hungry, but it was more of a rhetorical question; so, he stood himself up and thoroughly searched for edible things for her to eat. Eventually, the thing that she placed before on the table with some embarrassment was some instant, canned food. She, however, raised one of her brows.

"It's not like I'm complaining, but I watched you just now," she cleared her throat, "Do you really have no real food?"

After a few moments of silence and a few successively darker shades staining his cheeks, he pouted, "That's why I'm living in a basic apartment like this, it's not like I can't afford more. I don't spend a lot of time here anyway,"

Oh, right, she agreed, he was a surgeon, indeed. And when you work between 90 and 120 hours a week, you don't really have time to cook and properly take care of yourself. In order to somehow make up for the kindness that he'd showed her, she stood herself up and reached for the fridge, sliding the metal door open. There, she found more of what she'd been given â€" canned food â€" as well as some instant noodles packages, along with a couple of beers, some soup that emanated an unpleasant smell and a few fresh tomatoes.

"You barely have anything edible here," she complained, pouting, "So, regarding your promise, my first question for you is â€" what do you like to eat?" as she inquired, she turned to face him with a bright enough smile to be called genuine, and he wondered where her new wave of energy originated from.

"It's nearly 11 pm, I'd rather sleep than eat right now."

Her eyebrows furrowed, she steeled herself there, "No can do, at least let me do this much."

He sighed as he gave into her, still pointing towards the fridge, "But you said there's no food."

She walked past him to the entrance of his apartment, where her coat was found and quick on her feet, she put her shoes on â€" motions that had him question her as he caught up with her. He placed a hand on her shoulder so as to stop her, and she only looked at him in response, and she was brighter than he'd seen her be the entire day and his response was exactly what he'd called her, annoying â€" his heart had been giving him goose bumps at the sight of her from the very beginning, even if rare, and the entire day, that stupid organ of his, that was nothing more than troublesome, kept on pounding rapidly, very much so that he'd question the probabilities of an

imminent heart dysfunction. However, she was planted there, expectant.

"If I hurry, I bet I can find a convenience store open. You just need to tell me what to buy,"

With a sigh implying content, he slid forward so he could also grab his own coat and with seemingly lazy movements, he put his shoes on, "I'm coming with you."

* * *

><p>A couple hours later, the sink was stacked with dirty dishes and few remnants of the rice balls Sakura had made " as per Sasuke's shy request " could be found either spread on the table or in the said sink. The two of them had retreated on the sofa of his living room, the man sat in a contemplating stance as the girl gazed at him; they had much to discuss, but none knew where to begin, what aspect of what was going to happen later should be handled first. What the Haruno was thinking of, however, was that she had to revise her choices in life " she had surrendered herself to a man she barely that, indeed, showed her a lot of kindness, but it still was a disputable decision.<p>

"I'd really like to know more about you, Uchiha-san," his orbs made their way towards her face and she couldn't miss how bloodshot they were, "But, first, I have to ask " what's gonna come out of this?"

By this, she must've meant the fact that he had brought her to his place, that he had indirectly vowed to ensure her safety and a better life, that he had also indirectly cared about her; he also had to revise his choices, but it was anything but regret that he felt as he held her gaze, as he had her there beside him.

"It's really uncool that I didn't think that far ahead but," the Uchiha scratched his head and unconsciously turned away from her to hide his embarrassment, "I thought we could live together."

It was the unspoken promise he'd made to her when they were at the hospital, and she was indeed aware of that, but the acknowledgement of the meaning behind his words cumulated with her fractioned innocence caused her body to mimic his, and she lowered her head with cheeks tinted the prettiest, most vivid shade of crimson. He noticed.

"Isn't it wrong, for a highschool student to live with a man when they're not related in any way?..." her speech lost intensity to the point where her words were almost murmurs in the silence that surrounded them.

Indeed, Sasuke hadn't thought of that aspect, of the morality of his proposition, and he shrugged; what was he supposed to say, how was he supposed to justify his train of thought and explain that he wanted to protect her ... wait, protect her? Just when did he get that immersed into that girl, that girl that he found pleasure in analyzing each time she was found before his eyes?

"I don't know," he lost himself to his thoughts, trying to make for a good response, "It'd be sad if he kept hurting you."

When he said that, she felt a ball of happiness forming itself in her chest and he watched his features shift to embarrassment again and she knew "he was about as innocent as she was, if that was possible for man that had to be hitting thirty soon. When she thought about how he'd been handling everything, it occurred to her that he meant no harm, and most importantly, that he was quite dishonest; dishonest in the sense that he was inapt when it came to exposing the feelings he bore, and that he'd easily get flustered, even if not to the extent a girl her age would.

"Have you been in relationships before?..."

That was not what she meant to ask but for some reason, her bloody mouth decided to disobey her commands as well, and even though it should've meant nothing to her, she felt the need to know, and she despised the seed of jealousy planted in her chest. Obvious enough, the man was taken aback by her inquisition but, nevertheless, pondered on how he should respond; what she managed to observe in his behaviour was that his behaviour was 10 times more honest and genuine than his words were, and thus, even though he wasn't as sentimental as most women would want men to be directly, things surely weren't as they seemed.

"Not really, I never was interested in women," he trailed off, contemplative, "To the point where people said I was asexual, aromantic even,"

What a way to cheer her up, how pleased she was to receive that sort of answer; however, she couldn't help but prey further, "Are you ... interested in me? Is that why you got involved with me?" she tried, and she wouldn't hate him if he didn't feel that way.

Sasuke truly did not know how to respond and since he'd been cornered by questions of the sort, he concluded that he ought to delve into some last-minute introspection "mostly for her sake, but for his as well. He'd thought she was pretty before, when they first met even, and he'd watched her with increasing curiosity each time she stopped by the hospital; when Naruto rightfully complimented her, he felt enraged, and he felt some sort of inappropriate possessiveness that he had found her, he had watched her and would have wanted to continue doing so, not to mention that the moment his gruesome theory ended up being correct... common sense pretty much flew out the window. So...

"I guess?" that wasn't supposed to be a question but he couldn't express more, he couldn't let out more than that.

Still, she was happy.

"If we live together, Uchiha-san, I'll end up falling for you," she murmured, both afraid and ashamed at the same time.

Sasuke stood himself up and with relaxed steps made his way to the door of his bedroom, gesticulating that she entered and, obediently, she did so. He briefly searched his wardrobe for a clean sweater that he offered her.

"That's okay," he was halfway out the door, "You can sleep in that, 'cause you'll need the uniform tomorrow."

She nodded and he pointed to the bed, "I'll sleep on the couch so you make yourself comfortable there. We'll talk tomorrow,"

When she found herself alone in his room, she couldn't help but inhale the scent that lurked around, his scent " it wasn't unpleasant in the least.

* * *

><p>"Rank at graduation?" she chuckled, spreading butter on a slice of bread.<p>

"First, obviously," he took a sip of his coffee and she noted, it was black and sugar-free " he didn't like anything that tasted sweet after all.

"Best friend?" her index finger was pointed to him in an interrogatory manner, and he enjoyed the smile inhabiting her face.

"Uzumaki Naruto, but you'll get in trouble if you ever mention that."

Even his smirk is cute, she thought and Sakura wondered " when did she begin to allow herself to have free, shameful thoughts of the sort. She had once believe that she wouldn't experience love, that that emotion was restricted to people that had some worth to their existence, but her chest protested with a jolt as though saying 'you thought he was cute from the beginning' and when he pushed his bangs out of his face the girl believed she was about to lose it.

"Family?" it was quite the typical, obligatory question but she had skipped it as, to her, that notion wasn't as lovely as it might have been to other human beings.

"An older brother, he's a lawyer."

With a tilt of the head, she expressed that she didn't understand, "What about your parents?"

"They died in a car crash years ago."

The grim reveal got the better of her and she felt for him " in her opinion, he didn't deserve to have that happen to him, and she couldn't help but try to imagine a younger Uchiha Sasuke, completely dressed in black as he attended their funeral. It wasn't an image she'd want to remember later, but, he picked on her newfound concern. Then, his index and middle fingers glued together, he poked the centre of her forehead in an affectionate manner, as to say that it wasn't important, or that she shouldn't worry about him.

"You go to North High, right?" he checked.

She nodded.

"I'll pick you up when school's over."

* * *

><p>OR = Operation room

**Haru no Sakura = spring field of cherry blossoms / cherry blossoms
in spring **

PE = Physical education

* * *

><p>Hey guys, so I decided to give writing another chance and I had
this particular headcanon in mind that I wanted to try - let me know
what you think about it & if you think I should do the second
part of it, then I will. In the beginning, I quite liked how and
where it was going, but I feel like I kind of rushed it even for a
two-shot so idk, just tell me if you enjoyed, 'cause I really wanted
to try a different AU, where Sakura isn't the
doctor.<p>

Review?

/Ella

End
file.